

Too Lazy to be a Villainess

Chapter 20

The world was warm. The sun was shining. The grass was soft beneath my chubby hands, and my ball—my very favorite ball—was right in front of me.

It had little golden stars on it, which made it the most beautiful thing I owned. I gave it a gentle tap with my royal fingers. It rolled away.

Marella hurried to pick up my ball and placed it back in my lap with a smile. "Here you go, Princess."

"Tha-woo..."

Well, I wanted to say thank you. That was definitely my intention. My royal gratitude was meant to be conveyed in the most elegant way possible. But, alas, my baby mouth had other plans.

Marella, however, nodded knowingly, as if I had spoken in the most sophisticated of tongues.

"Yes, yes, Princess, you're very welcome," she said, looking absolutely delighted.

Ah, a true lady-in-waiting, one who understands the depths of my brilliance without me needing to say much.

I took the ball with both of my beautiful hands and continued my very important activity: patting it lazily while sitting in my grand and glorious position—on the softest patch of grass I could find.

Meanwhile, Nanny was making me a flower crown.

I watched her carefully as she added tiny leaves and delicate flowers, each one placed with precision. It was taking a while, but I was a patient baby. Soon, I would be the most exquisitely decorated princess in the empire.

Marella looked in the direction of the Throne Room, saying, "...It's taking too long."

Nanny, carefully placing another flower into my crown, didn't even look up. "It's an official decree. Of course, it takes time."

I agree.

After Papa declared a national holiday for my first word, the nobles rushed to him like their lives depended on it. They pleaded, begged, even looked like they might cry.

But it's not like Papa just declared one day of national holiday.

He declared a whole week.

A whole week.

I mean... Not that I blame him. Of course, I don't blame him. I am, after all, his diamond-like treasure, but even I think this is a bit much.

I mean, he just cannot declare a national holiday just because I spoke. And he is still the emperor. Shouldn't he be doing, I don't know, emperor things?

Like ruling? Waging war? Terrifying his enemies with a single glance?

Not spending his time personally crushing the desperate pleas of his most powerful officials just so the entire empire can take a week off in honor of my baby babbling?

sigh...

But what can we do? At least he is not swinging his sword and rolling nobles' heads like a football.

Truly, Papa is a man of balance.

And... I continued playing with my ball, which later betrayed me.

With a slight miscalculation of force (which, I must remind you, is not my fault—I'm still working with baby coordination here), my beautiful, golden-starred ball rolled away. Not too far. Just enough to make my tiny fingers twitch in mild frustration.

I turned to—Marella and Nanny—for assistance.

Marella was enthusiastically gossiping with another maid. Nanny was adjusting my flower crown with the intensity of an artist creating a masterpiece.

...Right.

So I was on my own.

Fine. A true princess handles her own problems.

With the grace of a queen and the crawling abilities of an eight-month-old (which, let's be honest, is not much), I dragged my royal self forward. I moved slowly. No need to panic. I will get my ball back.

I reached out for my beloved ball—

It rolled again.

Traitor.

I let out a deep sigh—the sigh of a woman burdened by the sheer incompetence of fate. But I was not one to give up. No. Lavinia Devereux was no quitter.

I pushed forward, a warrior on a mission.

But the ball?

It rolled into the bushes.

A BIG TRAITOR.

I crawled forward. But I couldn't find my Traitor ball.

HUH!? WHERE DID IT GO!?

I looked around and then—

"Are you looking for this?"

A small voice rang out.

I turned—

And—

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS SMALL PEASANT DOING HERE?!

Standing a few steps away, holding my ball in his annoyingly tiny hands, was a six-year-old boy with dark hair, brown eyes, and the expression of someone who was the most innocent creature ever born.

OSRIC VALERIUS EVERHART.

The future male lead.

The golden boy of destiny.

The child blessed by the gods or fate or whatever ridiculous force decided to make him the hero of this story.

The same little boy who would one day grow up, become ridiculously powerful, and abandon his fiancée—aka the villainess—aka ME.

And yet, here he was, standing before me, holding my beloved ball like some kind of benevolent deity bestowing divine mercy upon a lowly mortal.

...Unacceptable.

I narrowed my eyes, my baby brain scrambling for an appropriate response. Should I snatch my ball and flee? No, that would make me look weak.

Should I declare war? Too soon.

Osric tilted his head, his tiny noble features unreadable. "Do you want it back?"

Of course, I want it back, you idiot.

But alas, all I managed to say was—

"Ba."

PERFECT. BRILLIANT. Truly, a wordsmith of the highest caliber.

Osric tilted his head. "Huh?"

UGH.

How frustrating. I needed to get my ball back without looking weak. I needed to establish dominance.

Then—

HE SMILED INNOCENTLY.

Oh.

The audacity. How dare you smile in front of me?

I am so pissed.

I stared.

He dared.

I have faced many injustices in my eight months of existence.

Being force-fed mushy carrots? Horrific.

Having to suffer the humiliation of an accidental burp in front of the royal court? Tragic.

But this?

This was truly vile.

Then, he crouched down, rolling my ball lazily between his hands.

MY. BALL.

And then, with an innocence so pure it should be illegal, he had the audacity to ask—

"Do you want to play together?"

You wish, you bastard.

I narrowed my eyes. A chill ran through the air. The sun dimmed. Somewhere in the distance, a raven probably cawed, sensing the battle of wills about to unfold.

Osric's small, princely face was unreadable, his brown eyes wide with childlike curiosity. Lies. This was the same future male lead who would grow up and break my heart in another timeline.

But not this time. Not if I destroy him first.

I squared my tiny shoulders, sitting up as straight as possible—well, as straight as an eight-month-old with questionable balance could manage.

The wind blew. Dramatically.

I pointed one chubby hand at him, the universal baby gesture for 'Give it back, peasant.'

Osric, the future hero of the empire, the golden child of fate, the future sword-wielding, enemy-slaying legend, blinked at me.

Then—

HE HAD THE AUDACITY TO TILT HIS HEAD.

"What's wrong?" he asked, looking genuinely confused.

Oh. Oh, the disrespect.

"Ba." I demanded. Return my royal possession, you fool.

He smiled. SMILED.

I gasped.

Osric then had the gall to roll the ball between his hands again, his tiny noble fingers tainting my beloved possession with his hero protagonist germs.

"Oh," he said, as if realizing something deeply profound. "Do you want me to roll it back to you?"

WHAT DO YOU THINK I AM, YOUR PET, YOU VERY SMALL IDIOT?!

I exhaled sharply. Steadied my rage. No, I would not lower myself to his level. I was a Devereux—graceful, regal, and above such nonsense.

With the elegance of a war general commanding their troops, I lifted my chubby baby hand and extended my fingers imperiously.

Give. It. Back.

He just... blinked at me.

Then he looked at the ball.

Then at me.

Then at the ball again.

Then—at me.

AH. HE IS PISSING ME OFF.

Before I could combust with rage, he finally stepped forward, holding out the ball like he was offering me some sacred artifact.

"Here you go," he said.

I snatched it.

With both of my tiny, beautiful hands, I grabbed my beloved possession and clutched it to my chest like the most precious of treasures.

Then—I glared.

Hard.

With the fire of a thousand burning suns.

And then.

Then—

I saw it.

His cheeks.

Turning pink.

...WT FISH.

WHY?

WHY IS HE BLUSHING?

What kind of nonsense—what absurd turn of events—what ridiculous hero protagonist nonsense was this?!

Then—he spoke.

"Do you like me?"

WHAAAAAAAAAAAAATTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTT?!

The world turned around me.

I froze.

I think even my blood froze.

Did he—did he just—did this pea-sized noble menace just—?!

I stared at him, my entire existence shattered.

Like?! LIKE?! LIKE?!?!?

I can't believe what he just said. Just as I was about to combust from the sheer audacity of this pea-sized noble menace, a familiar voice rang out from behind me.

"I see you're here."

Papa.

Before I could react, a pair of strong arms lifted me up from the ground. I was swooped into papa's embrace, his hands brushing off my dress with meticulous care.

"Sorry, I was late," he murmured, his voice gentle—a contrast to the cold, murderous aura radiating off of him like a storm waiting to strike.

Then—his crimson eyes darkened.

Dangerously.

His lips curved into an almost-smile. The kind that made men tremble in their boots.

"You see, I was dealing with some fools."

His tone was casual, but oh, the underlying menace. The promise of bloodshed.

And then.

His gaze shifted.

To Osric.

Uh-oh.

For the second time, I saw Osric Valerius Everhart—the future hero, the golden protagonist—freeze.

(The first time had been during my introduction ceremony.)

Papa tilted his head slightly, the movement as slow and deliberate as a predator eyeing prey.

"The Everhart Heir?" Papa drawled, voice smooth yet ice-cold. "What are you doing here? And why are you alone with my daughter?"

The world seemed to hold its breath. Even the wind dared not move, the birds fell silent, and somewhere in the palace, a servant probably fainted from sheer secondhand terror.

Osric, to his credit, did not immediately perish on the spot. Instead, he blinked up at the Emperor of the continent like some wide-eyed little fawn.

"I was... I was walking around here and I saw the Princess. She... she looked like she lost her way."

Lies. Slander. A complete and utter defamation of my character.

I did not lose my way, Papa. This idiot was holding my ball hostage.

But of course, Papa didn't understand.